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# KING

# ■ PROGRESS, ■ MANAGING ■ CHANGE

## A REPORT TO ONTARIO TAXPAYERS

Investing in Priority Services

Within a More

Accountable,

Affordable,

Innovative Government



Ontario



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# MAKING PROGRESS, MANAGING CHANGE

## A REPORT TO ONTARIO TAXPAYERS

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# INTRODUCTION BY THE PREMIER OF ONTARIO

**W**ELCOME to the Ontario government's first report to taxpayers.

We recognize that each dollar we spend belongs to you. Your government is accountable for spending *your* money wisely.

Our goal is renewed opportunity, more jobs and a brighter future for our children. To achieve this goal, our first task was to quickly get Ontario's finances in order.

Two years ago, we faced a deficit of \$11.3 billion. We promised to end the cycle of rising deficits and balance the budget in five years. We are *on track* to achieve this target.

From 1985 to 1995, your Ontario taxes were raised 65 times, to among the highest in North America. In the last two years, we've announced 30 tax *cuts*.

From 1985 to 1995, Ontario government spending doubled. We promised to cut the cost of government administration by one third. We are now more than *halfway* there.

Two years ago, government overspending and our rising deficit threatened essential services such as health care, education and community safety. We promised to *protect* these services. We have done that.

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Our plan is working. We are:

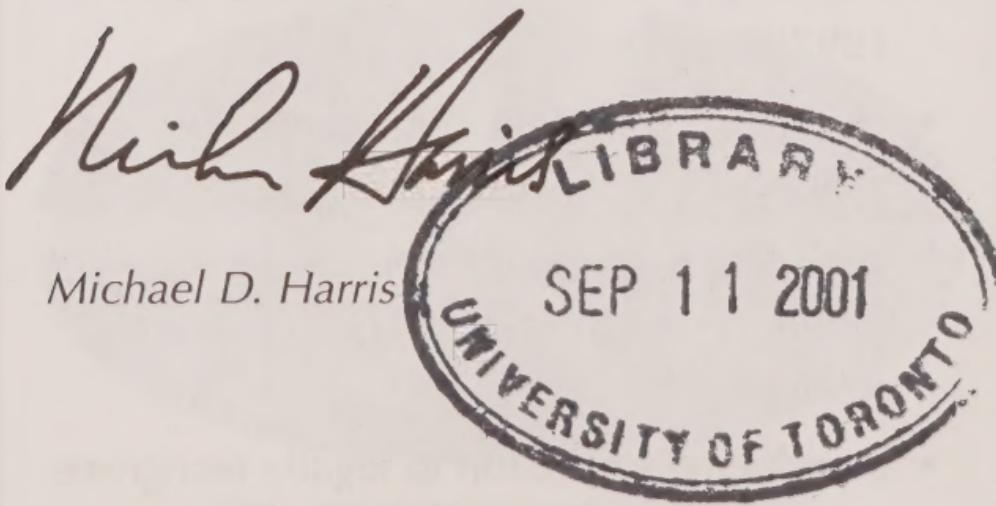
- Investing in priority services;
- Maintaining safe and secure communities;
- Cutting taxes and removing barriers to job creation;
- Making government work for people.

As you will read on the following pages, we have made solid progress.

The services you value most *are* being improved. Jobs *are* being created. The economy *is* growing at an impressive rate. Taxes *are* being cut. The government *is* becoming more effective, open and accountable.

To ensure that we stay on track, every government ministry now follows a rigorous planning process, identifying what it plans to achieve each year and the targets it has set to measure results.

The highlights that follow are drawn from business plans, which contain far more detail than is possible to include in this booklet. I urge you to read these plans and follow our progress. We welcome your comments.



To provide comments, refer to page 20.

# INVESTING IN PRIORITY SERVICES: HEALTH CARE

## ■ WHAT WE'VE DONE

### Put patients first

- Exceeded the commitment to safeguard health care spending at \$17.4 billion.
- Reinvested \$25 million into hospital services in high-growth areas.
- Added more than 375 new drugs to Ontario's drug benefit plan to assist low-income families and seniors. Increased the total number of people enrolled for help with unusually high drug costs by 60 per cent.
- Reinvested \$1 million to create centres of nursing excellence.
- Invested \$23.5 million to provide 6,000 patients with mental health services in the community.

## ■ WHAT WE'RE DOING

### Investing in health care renewal

- Investing \$18.5 billion in health care for 1997/98.
- Investing \$16.5 million on cancer services to serve 24,000 people.
- Providing funding of \$103.1 million to ensure access to essential health care services.
- Introducing legislation to legally recognize nurse practitioners.

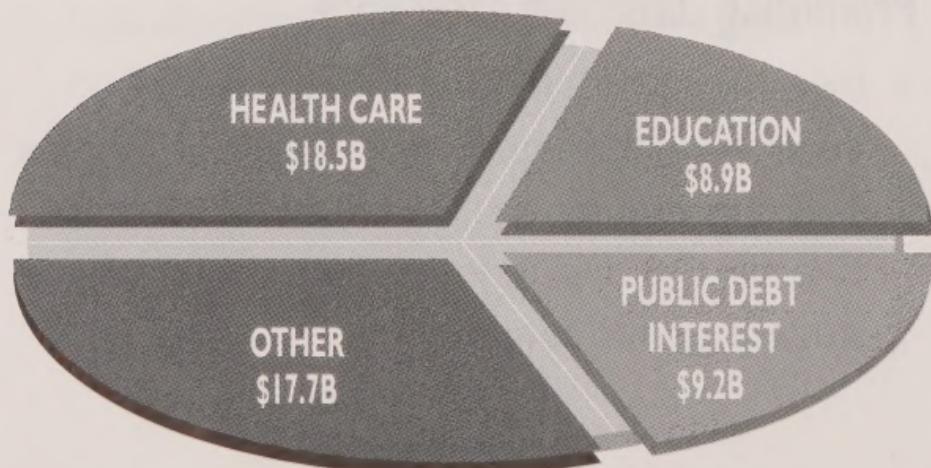
- Supporting community-based long-term care for more than 80,000 people through a \$170 million investment.
- Establishing 43 "one-stop" Community Care Access Centres to coordinate long-term health care services.

### TARGETS WE'VE SET

## Create a healthier Ontario

- Provide treatment for more than 35,000 additional patients in hospital-based priority programs in 1997/98.
- Recruit 40 physicians to practise in under-serviced areas in 1997/98.
- Increase the number of people enrolled for help with unusually high drug costs by an additional 30 per cent.
- Produce 400 nurse practitioner graduates by 1999.
- Reduce childhood vaccine-preventable diseases by vaccinating 95 per cent of children by the year 2000.

## SUPPORT FOR HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION



**TOTAL 1997/98 SPENDING: \$54.3 BILLION**

# INVESTING IN PRIORITY SERVICES: EDUCATION

## ■ WHAT WE'VE DONE

### Put students first

- Created Grade 3 province-wide benchmarks in reading, writing and mathematics to measure future improvement.
- Introduced school councils across Ontario to give parents a stronger voice in their children's education.
- Provided funding assistance for 42 per cent of full-time university students and 55 per cent of college students.
- Passed the *Fewer School Boards Act* to reduce administrative duplication, focus spending on the classroom and make the system more accountable.
- Established standards of practice for the teaching profession.

## ■ WHAT WE'RE DOING

### Promoting classroom excellence

- Investing \$29.7 million in education excellence through a more rigorous Grades 1–8 curriculum, a standard report card for Grades 1–8 and independent testing of student performance.

## Investing in college and university students

- Launching pilot projects with a five-year \$30 million fund to help learning-disabled students make the transition to college or university.
- Providing a 10 per cent tax credit to employers who hire a student for a job related to his or her studies.

### TARGETS WE'VE SET

## Invest in the classroom

- Match funding with the private sector to create a \$500 million fund to help 166,000 students get a college diploma or university degree over the next 10 years.
- Invest \$650 million for primary and secondary school renewal and building over the next two years. This will replace 1,000 portable classrooms with permanent facilities.
- Reduce the number of school boards and school trustees. Cap the salaries of school trustees.
- Introduce legislation in 1997/98 to ensure that all school boards establish school councils.
- Ensure that at least 70 per cent of participants in employment preparation programs get jobs or finish school in 1997/98.

# SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITIES

## WHAT WE'VE DONE

### Protected Ontario communities

- Tightened the eligibility for parole by the Ontario Board of Parole. The number of offenders granted parole in 1995/96 dropped by 6.7 per cent.
- Cut down on drinking and driving by implementing roadside driver's licence suspension. More than 10,000 roadside suspensions were issued to drinking drivers in the first six months of this program.
- Cut down on drinking and driving by doubling RIDE funding to \$1.2 million.
- Made Ontario safer through the new *Fire Protection and Prevention Act*.
- Protected 99 per cent of Ontario's commercial forest with no loss of life from forest fires.
- Supported victims through the Victims Bill of Rights and expansion of victim/witness and crisis assistance programs.
- Invested \$5 million in forensic DNA testing services to investigate violent crimes and provide opportunities to resolve outstanding cases.

## Build self-sufficiency

- Cut taxes for 530,000 low-income individuals and families. Eliminated taxes entirely for 30,000 more individuals and families.
- Launched the Ontario Works Program, which requires welfare recipients to work or be retrained in return for their benefits.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING

### Supporting victims

- Implementing a \$27 million program over the next four years to help women and their families break the cycle of violence.
- Creating an educational endowment for the families of police, firefighters and other public safety officers killed in the line of duty.

### Building a swifter, more efficient justice system

- Beginning construction on two ultra-efficient provincial jails. This is part of a multi-year plan to reduce incarceration costs by 40 per cent.
- Investing \$25 million over five years to help police forces coordinate the investigation and prosecution of serial predators.
- Implementing a 24-hour telewarrant service to speed up police investigations.
- Establishing a strict discipline facility for young offenders to reduce youth crime.
- Proposing the toughest drinking and driving and truck safety legislation in North America.

## Protecting vulnerable Ontarians

- Creating a new support program designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Investing \$15 million to help children at risk through enhanced training of all Children's Aid Society staff.
- Investing an additional \$5 million to strengthen enforcement measures to collect child support owed by delinquent parents.
- Giving vulnerable children a healthier start in life through a \$44.6 million program. This includes preschool speech and language services and nutrition programs delivered in partnership with the private sector.

### TARGETS WE'VE SET

## Make Ontario safer

- Ensure that Ontario's road fatality rate remains among the lowest in North America.
- Ontario Provincial Police will increase road safety by stopping more than 100,000 vehicles annually to provide both enforcement and education.
- Reduce workers' rate of lost-time injuries by an average of six per cent in 1997/98 as part of an overall reduction target of 30 per cent between 1995 and 2000.
- Speed up time by 65 per cent for reporting scientific analysis of evidence for police investigations by the year 2000.

## Improve quality of life

- Help 90,000 families and 125,000 children with a new child care tax credit for lower-income working families currently receiving no help from the subsidy system.
- Continue to increase self-sufficiency by reducing welfare dependency an average of five per cent a year, 1995–98.
- Cut taxes even more for low-income individuals and families. Almost 1.2 million Ontarians will benefit.
- Increase the amount of time that Ontario inmates spend contributing to communities through work programs.
- Protect tenants from unfair rent increases and arbitrary eviction.
- Reduce smog-causing pollutants 25 per cent by 2005.

## ONTARIANS PAY LESS PERSONAL INCOME TAX

Single Senior  
Total Income  
\$20,000

**\$895 Before Tax Cuts**

**\$625 After**

Family of Four  
With Two Children  
Total Income  
\$25,000

**\$505 Before Tax Cuts**

**\$35 After**

Single Parent  
With One Child  
Total Income  
\$30,000 With  
\$5,000 Child  
Care Expenses

**\$1,135 Before Tax Cuts**

**\$645 After**

# CUTTING TAXES TO CREATE JOBS

## ■ WHAT WE'VE DONE

### Deficit down, jobs up

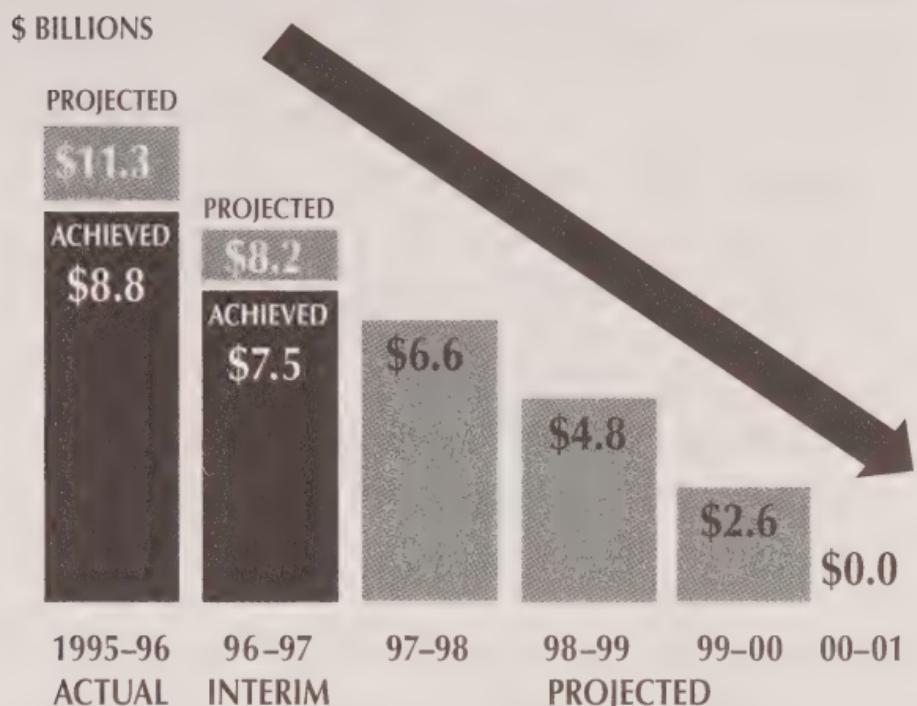
- Reduced the deficit from \$11.3 billion in June 1995 to \$7.5 billion in 1996/97.
- Reduced Ontario's personal income tax rate by 15 per cent.
- Established a climate for the creation of 168,000 net new jobs – 40.5 per cent of all new jobs created in Canada – since June 1995.

## ■ WHAT WE'RE DOING

### Cutting taxes

- Cutting taxes 20 more times in 1997/98, bringing the total to 30 tax cuts in two years.
- Making job-creating tax cuts that include further reductions to Ontario personal income tax. By January 1, 1998, the Ontario tax rate will have been cut by 22.4 per cent since 1995.
- Cutting Ontario taxes by 30 per cent or more for all taxpayers with incomes of \$60,000 or less.
- Continuing to cut payroll taxes so that, by 1999, 88 per cent of Ontario employers will no longer have to pay the Employer Health Tax.

## ON TRACK TO A BALANCED BUDGET



### Restoring tax fairness

- Reforming the property assessment and taxation system to make it up-to-date, consistent, understandable and fair for property owners.
- Taking action on the underground economy to improve tax system fairness. Making sure taxes owing are paid.
- Setting and freezing residential property tax rates province-wide for education. This would cut education property taxes by 50 per cent.
- Eliminating the outdated Business Occupancy Tax.

### Attracting investment

- Reducing taxes and eliminating red tape to make Ontario a more attractive location for investment and job creation.
- Marketing Ontario and Ontario products and services around the world to increase exports and attract new investments.

## Investing in jobs

- Establishing Community Small Business Investment Funds to help small businesses get the financing they need to grow and create jobs. Banks can earn tax credits by investing in small businesses.
- Expanding the network of 54 Ontario Business Connects workstations to make starting a new business in Ontario easier, faster and less expensive.
- Establishing a network of Small Business Enterprise Centres to provide mentoring in business planning, marketing, accounting and strategy.
- Setting up a \$23 million fund to help college programs meet the needs of employers and students.
- Implementing the \$20 million Telecommunications Access Partnership program to help communities and the private sector develop new ways to use the information highway.

## Future jobs through research

- Establishing a \$3 billion Research and Development Challenge Fund to promote business-university partnerships and research excellence.
- Providing the Ontario Business-Research Institute Tax Credit to support business-sponsored research and development performed by universities, teaching hospitals and other nonprofit research centres.

## Strengthen the economy

- Eliminate the deficit by the year 2000/01.
- Settle at least 95 per cent of collective agreements without strikes or lockouts.
- Help Ontario achieve the highest level of mineral exploration investment in Canada in 1997/98.
- Increase tourism revenues from U.S. overnight visitors by three per cent in 1997/98.
- Increase international awareness of Ontario as a preferred location for investment by five per cent in 1997/98.
- Increase agri-food exports by 12 per cent in 1997/98.
- Support Ontario's competitive position by maintaining a five-year freeze on average hydro rates.
- Maintain Ontario's leadership as the most research and development-intensive economy in Canada. Narrow the gap with the United States.

# MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK FOR PEOPLE

## WHAT WE'VE DONE

### Streamlined government

- Reduced government administration costs by \$200 million.
- Reduced government long-distance telephone costs by 45 per cent.
- Reduced the cost of temporary help services by 23 per cent.
- Made government more open and accountable by requiring public organizations to report the salaries of officials making \$100,000 or more.
- Reduced the size of the Ontario Public Service by 11,500 staff since June 1995.
- Opened 60 new driver and vehicle service kiosks across the province, giving Ontario drivers speedier, more convenient access to testing, licensing and registration services.

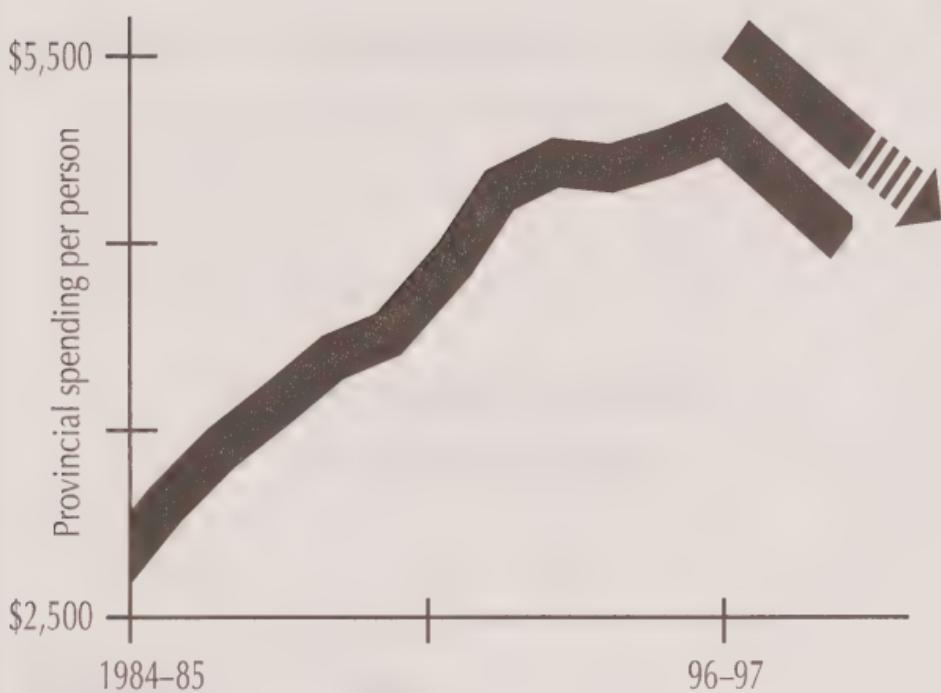
## WHAT WE'RE DOING

### Delivering better service

- Reporting on the results of government programs and setting targets for results.
- Reducing administration costs of grievances and dispute resolution.

- Determining better ways to deliver the services that government provides, including partnerships with the private sector.
- Creating fewer, less costly and more efficient local governments that can deliver better services for less.

## LESS GOVERNMENT, LOWER SPENDING



### TARGETS WE'VE SET

#### Improve efficiency

- Reduce the number of MPPs by 21 per cent, from 130 to 103, in future provincial elections.
- Reduce the number of municipal politicians by 12 per cent in 1997/98.
- Eliminate 49 agencies and consolidate 35 regulatory agencies into 10.
- Reduce government office space by an additional 1.5 million square feet.

- Speed up land-use planning decision time by 50 per cent.
- Generate \$60 million in revenues from sales of surplus real estate properties.
- Eliminate more than 1,000 unnecessary regulations over the next two years.
- Increase the level of private sector service for highway design, construction, administration and maintenance.
- Cut government administration costs by one-third – \$300 million in total – by 1997/98.

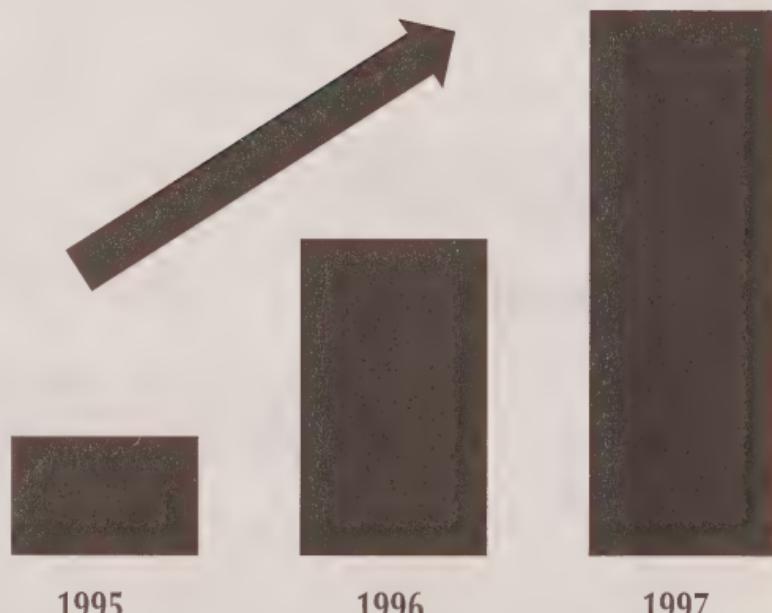
## RENEWED OPTIMISM IN ONTARIO

### Consumer Confidence Rising

110 —

Ontario Consumer Confidence Index

96 —



Source: Conference Board of Canada

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